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AUTHOR Robinson, Sharon P.; West, Cornel; Cortes, Ernesto J., Jr.; Haycock, Kati P.

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ABSTRACT

The four papers in this document are centered around several themes in education reform: (1) the need to reimagine and recreate strategies; (2) the need to approach familiar obstacles innovatively; (3) the need to utilize all available resources; and (4) and the need to engage in this work cooperatively and with courage and vision. In the first paper, "National and Local Strategies for Building Teacher Expertise: A Necessary Relationship"(Sharon Robinson), education is seen as the way to acquire knowledge for with knowledge comes power. The second paper, "Race Matters" (Cornel West) offers hope and justice, loyalty, commitment, and trust to the most vulnerable members of the community, who often are blamed for the downward mobility that leads to rage. The third paper, "Organizing Communities for Student Achievement" (Ernesto J. Cortes, Jr.), suggests that the future lies in individual capacity and collaboration, and in the power that teaching ordinary people about public life and public skills brings. The fourth paper, "A Call to Action: Thinking-and-Acting K-16" (Kati P. Haycock), also looks at the educational needs of poor and minority children and urges development of new systems from elementary through higher education. A brief section describing the American Association for Higher Education and its Education Trust is appended. (CH)

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Reimagining Professional Development

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Four Presentations from AAHE's Fourth National Conference on School/College Collaboration

December 5–8, 1993

Sharon P. Robinson

Cornel West

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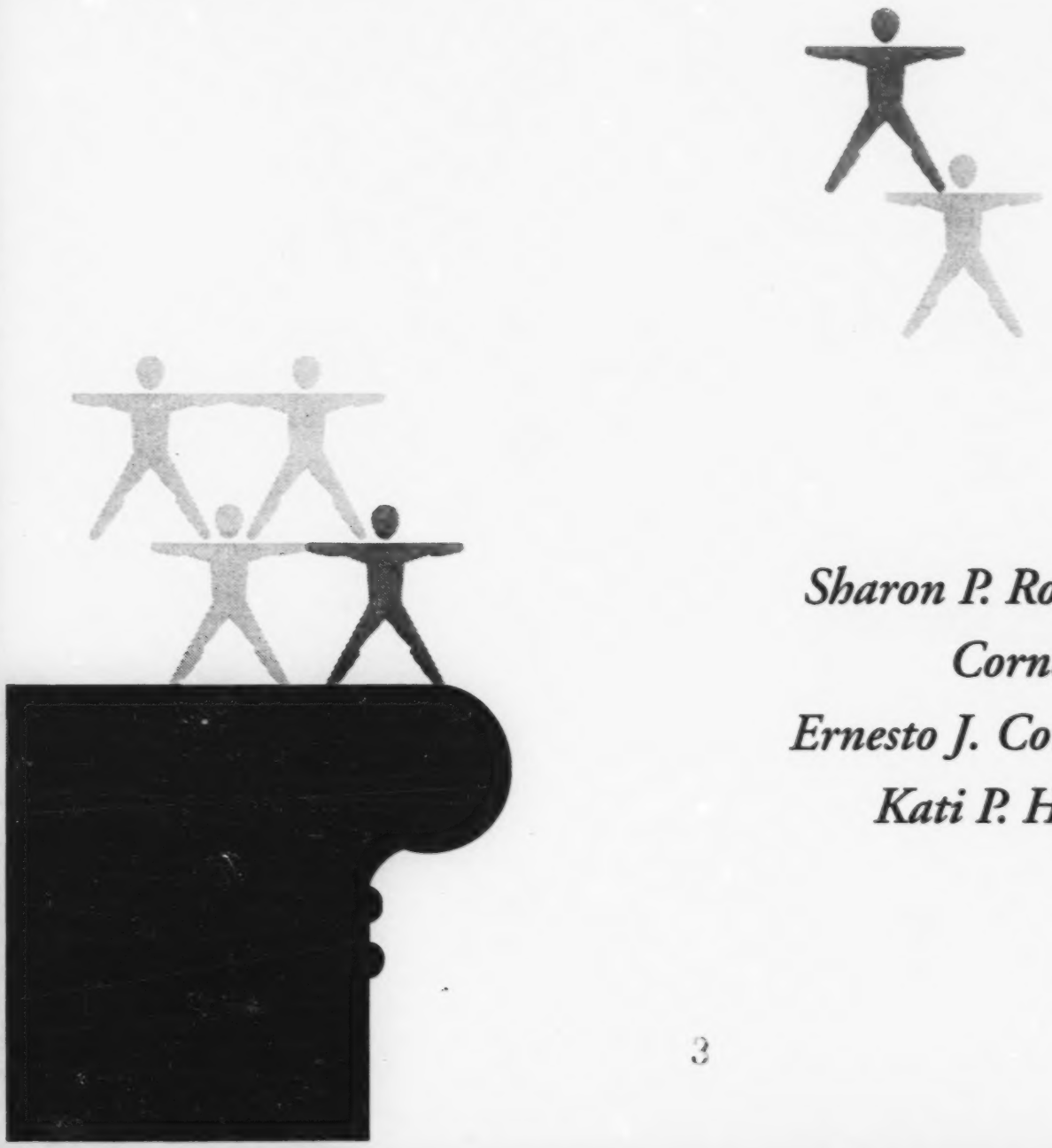

Sharon P. Robinson

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REIMAGINING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Four Presentations from AAHE's Fourth National Conference on
School/College Collaboration
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Sharon P. Robinson
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About AAHE

Introduction

In 1993, AAHE's Fourth National Conference on School/College Collaboration had as its title, "Reimagining Partnerships for Professional and Organizational Development." This theme succinctly described a major focus of all of our work in education reform: to reimagine and recreate strategies, to approach familiar obstacles innovatively, to utilize all available resources to encourage and support students, to engage in this work cooperatively, collaboratively, with courage and vision.

To support this theme, the speakers who were invited to share their thoughts exemplify courage, involvement, and dedication to their belief in human dignity and decency. We hope that the speeches in this booklet will raise important issues, uplift spirits, and offer hope.

Sharon Robinson's vision of audacious hope is education and liberation. Knowledge she says "liberates one for a more comprehensive understanding of one's situation. It is the prerequisite for disciplined, purposeful action. Knowledge liberates one for a more fulfilling grasp of life's mysteries."

In Cornel West's speech he offers us the notion of audacious hope in a time of deep despair. "Hope," he said, "has to do with making these Pascalian leaps of faith in the mental and moral capacities of ordinary people, ordinary children. Loving them enough, affirming them enough, criticizing them enough to convince them that they can make a difference and over the long run, if they come together, they along with others might be able to regenerate democratic possibilities in a civilization in deep decline and decay."

From community organizer Ernesto Cortes we hear West's notion of audacious hope put into action. For Cortes, the power of audacious hope resides in the power of individual capacity and collaboration. Only by following his "Iron Rule of power--never do for anyone what they can do for themselves" and teaching ordinary people at "mini-universities about public life and public skills" can audacious hope become reality.

In Kati Haycock's talk she reviews the lessons we have learned which can move us toward building good schools and good systems. Amidst the devastating realities of the conditions of today's children, she sees audacious hope in her memory of one young student, Tamika. Tamika had grown up in the most difficult of situations, but when asked what she needed most, responded, "Teach me. Give me the best possible education you can. Make sure that I know everything that the rich suburban kids know and more because I want to be somebody."

We are grateful to the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation for making the Conference and this publication possible. We hope you find this compilation useful and look forward to working with you in the years ahead.

Carol Stoel and Grace Moy

National and Local Strategies for Building Teacher Expertise: A Necessary Relationship*

by Sharon P. Robinson
Assistant Secretary
Office of Educational Research and Improvement,
U.S. Department of Education

I am really honored by your invitation to be here, and I am very intrigued by your conference theme, the nature of the program that you've put together. I've really struggled with what to say in my time with you this afternoon. I did some of the usual stuff that speakers do: I looked at the theme and analyzed it — "Reimagining Partnerships for Professional and Organizational Development." I thought every aspect of this theme is about real hard work. Every aspect of this theme is a challenge. But I looked at it very seriously, because I know your theme was chosen with great care, and I'm really pleased to focus my remarks on these challenging issues. *Reimagine,* again with a vision; *professional,* all about sharing knowledge and being client-centered. It's about continuous learning, constant improvement. *Organizational,* putting together a structure and systems to support professional practice, being accountable for results. Your theme is a powerful value statement. So in the time that I will share with you, I'd like to talk about vision, I'd like to talk a bit about some of the implications for action suggested in our professional and organizational change strategies. I'd like to help you understand how the Clinton administration hopes to be a collaborator with you in implementing change. And in closing, perhaps reflect on what you might call the moral imperatives of it all. So to begin with vision.

All who discuss change, who study change, tell us that it's important to take time and

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collaboratively develop a clear statement of the future we would like to create. Now, that sounds like a really warm, satisfying thing to do. But then we read from the likes of Deming, who tells us that what we need to know in the future is both unknown and unknowable. And you think, how can we do that? Certainly, our usual practice, our old habit of long-range planning won't suffice. You know that practice of setting a prediction of the future we want to create and then pretending to organize all of our resources in support of that future, as though we can really control all of the elements that may impact on that future. Well, no matter how hard it is, a vision is an important beginning, it is the basis for reimagining, and it is the point around which we can coalesce and join forces. So the vision that I'd like you to consider with me is a vision of education and liberation. Education that has as its purpose helping students understand their own power to confront challenges and to overcome them. Becoming educated is to acquire knowledge, and knowledge is power. It is the power that liberates. Knowledge liberates one for a more comprehensive understanding of one's situation. It is the prerequisite for disciplined, purposeful action. Knowledge liberates one for a more fulfilling grasp of life's mysteries. Knowledge, in fact, is the source of liberation that is transformative, perhaps the most powerful, the most important kind of liberation. You see, it is in that transforming power that one can see possibilities. It is in that kind of transforming power that one understands how the imprisonment of Mandela made a prisoner of South Africa. It is that kind of knowledge, a knowledge that is transformative, that now brings Nelson Mandela and de Klerk to the table to collaborate.

Becoming educated is to acquire knowledge, and knowledge is power.

So the kind of knowledge that I see, the kind of liberation I suggest we envision for students, would present the educator with two jobs. First, students would have to be presented with very challenging problems. Then we would have to help students identify, understand, and own their power to access knowledge and develop skills to confront those problems, to solve them, to recreate their vision of the world and their understanding of their own power.

I am sharing this vision with you because it is, in fact, the vision of teaching and learning that was the basis for much of the work that I did in the National Center for Innovation at the NEA. We were a powerful collaborative, with sites all across the country — sites that sound a lot like your K-16 sites — where we were learning to confront one another and create learning communities in which our ability to help students liberate themselves and enjoy a more powerful vision of their future became the focus of our work. In this work, we confronted the questions of what represents achievement? what is learning all about? It soon became clear to us that one challenging aspect of all of this was to expand our own conception of what was worth knowing, and how to recognize achievement in all students when that achievement took different forms. We even developed a little strategy of saying, "Does the student know the facts? Can the student ask an important question of his or her own?" We were beginning to challenge the conception of "knowing" that was captured by a paradigm of answering 80 percent of someone's selected facts, and to move instead to the conception of "knowing" wherein students express power in a discipline by their ability to ask their own questions to design their own future learning.

That's the vision, and it's certainly about high standards and high expectations. But it's

about other challenging things, as well, and I'll put those challenges to you as questions. Do you believe that all students can learn? Do you believe that you can recognize achievement in every child so that that achievement is the foundation for future learning? If you don't have any immediate and affirmative response to the first question, you're probably still pondering the second. And it leads us to another important challenge, particularly for collaborations between K-12 and higher education organizations, one that Kati Haycock alluded to earlier. You see, we are so used to having very objective, standardized measures of achievement, the same measures for everybody...we're so unaccustomed to trusting our own judgment, and so untrusting of one another to make that judgment that we cling to the safe, well-defined standard measures. And now we're saying, if you expand what's worth knowing, you also have to expand your conception of achievement and how it is expressed. So the portfolio experiences represent an important development in assessment, but they also represent an important challenge to our way of thinking.

I'm going to try to demonstrate that challenge by sharing a personal experience. When I was a student, I was a well-schooled student, and I knew how to negotiate the system. When I went to the University of Kentucky as an undergraduate, it was at a time when I knew that my presence there would be a slight consternation to some and probably more than that to some others. I made sure I understood how professors would evaluate achievement. And if there was the slightest hint that there might be some difficulty in representing achievement in my performance, I made good and sure the professor gave objective tests. Now, there was one course that I had to take. It was Individual Differences, the required first course in the psychology major. It was where you learned about the bell-shaped curve and how ability is distributed. And I knew as the professor looked at me, he probably had a notion of where my ability might be within that distribution. I knew I had to make more than a C in that class because I was going to graduate school.

When I went to class on the first day, the professor left no doubt that there was reason for concern. He looked at me and said, "I know all men aren't created equal and you know it too." Well, at that point I looked for my drop-add slip. But then he said, "I give three exams; they're multiple choice and true/false." I put the drop-add slip away. I wasn't sure there was anyone better from whom to take this course, and it was required. I knew if I wrote a B on the exam paper and made sure it didn't look like a D, or could be mistaken for a C or anything else, I would get my A out of that class.

As we come to this notion of opening ourselves up to be more subjective, to have assessment be more authentic, I have to admit I worry a bit about our ability to recognize achievement in all students. What makes me feel hopeful? The notion that we're going to learn to do this together and that assessing all of our learning will be done in public. It will be a collaborative activity involving our professional peers, our parents, and community leaders as collaborators, because we now have to define a new standard of accomplishment, and we have to create a strong consensus that will help us know it when we see it, and know that we're all seeing the same thing. So this notion of bringing together high standards, the idea of expanding our conception of knowing and achievement, is slightly problematic unless we are determined to undertake these developments as a strong professional community interacting in an intense and important way with our clients and with community leaders.

Another important aspect of your theme, another aspect of reimagining, has to do with

teacher learning and the work that you are undertaking — engaging one another as professional peers and learning communities — will give you an opportunity to share what I regard to be as the most important time in education research and in the development of a professional knowledge base in teaching. I'm going to use two examples of these developments to try to make this point.

I had a chance to interact very recently with a group of people celebrating twenty-five years of work with Jim Comer at the Yale Child Development Center. As we think about that work, we understand that there are three crucial elements that support student achievement: professional knowledge about pedagogy and mental health, family and community engagement, and unrelenting political advocacy. Now, we don't often regard these three elements as part of a professional knowledge base, but as I had thought about the accomplishments of the sites that are called Comer Schools, and as you think about your work, imagine how far you might get without any one of them. We are redefining the professional knowledge base in teaching to certainly include developments in pedagogy, knowledge about mental health, knowledge about family and community engagement, and, yes, knowledge about political action. We know that that last element is necessary if we are to make the changes that we envision in schools.

In assessment, we must become advocacy-oriented in how we assess student learning so that each experience is a foundation for future growth.

Another important development that I had the chance to think about recently has to do with brain research. That's usually the province of the medical sciences; it's not often thought to be the business of educators and school people. But think about this: What we are learning about the brain and how it functions parallels a lot of what we are learning about organizations and how they function. For example, scientists tell us that the brain is a parallel processor, meaning that it is making connections all the time between thoughts and feelings. Making connections is an important function of the brain. We know that organizations are systems, that there are processes going on and that there's a relationship between process and outcome. For example, if we keep on doing what we've always done...you know the rest of it...we'll keep on getting what we've always gotten. So for all the attention on outcomes, and that is important, we must be equally attentive to process. Our processes of engagement, our processes in consensus building, our processes for communicating with one another across organizations are all important, because if we don't change those things, we won't change the outcome.

We're also told that the brain searches for meaning through common patterns and that each brain is unique. Now Mike Fullan tells us that you can't mandate what matters. Kati has already suggested to you that in your ten sites you have ten unique approaches to the interaction between thoughts and feelings, the search for meaning and patterns, the search for understanding. The brain also searches for meaning by making connections, as you are making connections with one another through professional development, continuous learning, and team learning. And finally, the brain is inhibited by threat and enhanced by challenge. Deming said, that to bring about real change, you must first drive out fear — the fear of failure, even the fear

of sanctions. Because as we take these risks to create deep change in the culture, deep change in the way we interact, we must be willing to reflect on our experience, acknowledge our successes and where we fell short, and build on those experiences for the future. In assessment, we must become advocacy-oriented in how we assess student learning so that each experience is a foundation for future growth.

With the growth in knowledge, ongoing research to expand the professional knowledge to support teaching practice in K-12 schools and in higher education, we are at a moment when we can, in fact, realize a vision of education as a liberating experience in all of our schools. And it also means that we all must learn to be good teachers. There are many collaborative experiences around, in which university and K-12 teachers are really working hard to understand how to interact across institutional boundaries. We're learning how to communicate with one another, how to get over those meddlesome, important barriers that can really frustrate our efforts.

In one experience I had the chance to document not long ago, the teachers and faculty folks told me that they were having a very hard time scheduling meetings. I thought, scheduling meetings? The school folks were saying that they were going to make every opportunity available for teachers to meet with the faculty. The faculty folks said that they were really eager to get a professional-development school going. I wanted to explore that issue with them further, and I found out that this was the problem: K-12 teachers wanted to meet early, before school, at 8 o'clock in the morning. Higher education folks wanted to meet after school, at 3:30 in the afternoon.

This was all about understanding the nature of the work of others, the full range of work that each school and higher education faculty member has to take on and consider. It was a really difficult issue for a while, until both were able to organize; some relief time was provided for K-12 teachers, and the higher ed folk decided that it can be fun to have breakfast in schools on occasion. But just dealing with confronting that difference in the culture, the pace, the way you view your job, and the importance of the vision, led folks to be able to overcome that important barrier.

Negotiating between two disciplines, understanding what an interdisciplinary approach might mean, [is] one of the most... important professional-development opportunities we can undertake.

Another barrier that I would like to discuss very briefly has to do with the fact that we are so discipline-bound in the academy that our disciplines are in fact cultures. They're cultures that embrace us and teach us a set of rules, or paradigms. It's important to understand that these rules help us to understand what is worth counting, what is worth seeing as evidence, and who is worth listening to in a discipline. These same rules tell us, sometimes explicitly, other times by implication, who is not worth listening to and what not to count. These disciplines represent a very contentious community, very often within the academy itself, and when you bring another community in, such as a K-12 institution, you've got an even more complex situation. Negotiating between two disciplines, understanding what an interdisciplinary approach might mean, understanding what achievement may look like, if in fact it depended on an interdisciplinary approach, represents one of the most difficult but

important professional-development opportunities we can undertake. It is the stuff that professionals should discuss and argue about.

I had another experience in my growing up at UK that helped me understand how interesting and unfortunate our habits in academic disciplines can be. One of the things that I had to study was Shakespeare. You've probably had similar experiences. A lot of us studied *Othello* because we studied the tragedies, and you may remember — as I remember very well — that the curriculum theme in the study of Shakespearian tragedies is understanding the tragic flaw in these otherwise exemplary characters.

When I studied *Othello* for the first time, I was a veteran of the civil rights movement, and the voter registration drive in the South was well under way. At the time I studied *Othello,* I couldn't help but wonder whether that play was not about race and politics and how they interact. But I must remind you I was a well-schooled student, and I knew that questions about race and *Othello* would not be expected either on the test or in the term paper, so I didn't raise those questions then. Now I'm very sorry, because I was learning with my colleagues, with my peers, about how to enter into full adult citizenship responsibilities, and we missed the chance to teach one another, to think together about important questions of race and politics. I don't know if the English department or the classics department or the political science department talk about those things together now, but our students need to be able to think about those things together. We as adult citizens need to be able to model that kind of courageous, intellectual pursuit in citizenship.

The higher ed community — the academy, if you will — is going to face many challenges to its culture, challenges born of the need to collaborate with other institutions, challenges born of very intense questioning about the value and appropriateness of what you do. Very soon, I suspect, you will be hearing about a new report that is being released by the Johnson Foundation, *An American Imperative — Higher Expectations for Higher Education*. This report, which cites the work of John Hope Franklin and the Joint Center for Political Studies, suggests that higher education must become more student-centered, it must become more concerned about values, and it must become a member of a broader community of citizens.

It asks that you, in fact, give yourself an assessment, and that you begin by asking three very interesting questions: What kind of people do we want our children and grandchildren to be? What kind of society do we want them to live in? How can we best shape our institution to nurture those kinds of people and that kind of society? These questions suggest to me that the things that are important are quite different from the amount of money that you have in research grants, the size of the graduate program, and other usual standards that we are accustomed to applying. This context of change, the need to collaborate, an expansion and explosion in professional knowledge, all come together in this new administration as an exciting adventure for all who are a part of it. I hope it will be for you as well, because you, too, have to be a part of it. Our education agenda is about partnerships, it's about flexibility and accountability, it's about high standards and professional development, it's about results. The legislative agenda, you probably have heard a lot about Goals 2000 — Educate America, in which we will, in fact, incorporate the six national goals as our vision, our aspirations for achievement and improvement in American education. We have put on the table a proposal for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. In that proposal, we suggest we should target

funds based on need, and that we should ask schools to take a systemic approach to their planning and reform strategies, stop just adding on programs and instead go with a comprehensive, logical, schoolwide strategy, and we will relax the regulations. Further, we're suggesting that there should be a great investment in rigorous, relevant professional development, and that the investment in professional development should not be compromised or fragmented by unnecessary federal restrictions. Finally, we're saying that parents and communities have to be more engaged, more involved, and that Title I resources should be used to support that end. The reauthorization of my agency, the Office of Education Research and Improvement, is similarly client-focused, in that the objective of research is to serve the field and to support improvements. It really is an exciting time.

I thought about all of this, and I thought about the nature of higher education, the nature of the academy, and the fact that we all have to be unified as very, very competent teachers. In thinking about the future and a vision, a time when we all feel empowered by competence as teaching professionals, I actually was reminded by a work from antiquity, if you will, even before Shakespeare. I was reminded of my study of the *Canterbury Tales,* and a very, very impressive character that we meet on the way to Canterbury, the Oxford cleric, the scholar. I'd like to leave you with these words about the scholar, because I think they're words we should embrace and take to heart: "He never spoke a word more than was need, formal at that, respectful in the extreme, short to the point, and lofty in his theme. The thought of moral virtue filled his speech, and he would gladly learn and gladly teach." You see, as we join in collaboratives, that's what we'll be doing — learning together, teaching together, and making all of our classrooms thriving crucibles of liberation. Good afternoon.

Race Matters*

by Cornel West
Professor of Religion and
Director, Afro-American Studies Program
Princeton University

It seems to me that one cannot imagine a more important gathering in which to talk seriously about how we can invigorate public life in our time. I stand before you tonight as one who is a small part of a long and rich tradition. And it is a tradition of struggle for freedom and for dignity. It's a tradition that goes all the way back to when we human beings began to conceive of ways in which we could generate mechanisms of accountability so that ordinary people could live lives of decency and dignity. I call it the "radical democratic tradition." It's the grand attempt to hammer out on the ground democratic procedures and processes. It has to do with ways of life and ways of struggle; it has to do with believing that there are Promethean forces among ordinary people that, if unleashed, can produce possibilities heretofore ignored and overlooked.

I come from a tradition that believes quite deeply that everyday people have lives punctuated with grandeur and epic significance. A sense of the tragic and the sublime resides within everyday people, and hence, any one of us who has the courage to believe that ordinary people ought to live lives of decency and dignity must go on to conclude that it means that their voices ought to be heard at the highest level of the decision-making processes in those institutions that guide and regulate their lives.

You all recall how Aristotle defines citizenship — ordinary persons capable of ruling or being ruled. When we look at the history of humankind, we recognize that democracies are rare in human history, and they usually do not last very long. When we look at what undermines these grand efforts to give ordinary people a voice, it is usually escalating levels of poverty, which produce despair, and escalating levels of paranoia, which produce distrust. These sentiments shatter the body politic and render citizens and ordinary people feeling helpless, powerless, impotent. It seems to me that we live in one of the most frightening and terrifying moments in the history of this country, precisely because it seems as if the very forces that have

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undermined every democracy going back to Athens are accelerating, radically calling into question the possibility of sustaining the best of the democratic tradition.

That is why what you all are about is such a crucial matter. Tradition is not something you inherit. If you want it, you must obtain it with great labor. And the radical democratic tradition is not something you inherit. It has to be remade, reshaped, reinvented, refined by every generation. Of course, Mr. Jefferson understood that; he put that in the Declaration. John Dewey said the same thing. Ralph Waldo Emerson said the same thing. The question is: Can we in this generation actually keep alive that tradition, which is the best of America. We can talk about the worst, the white supremacy, the male supremacy, the vast economic inequality, ecological abuse, the homophobia, the jingoism, nativism, atavism, the worst of civilization. But we must keep our critiques of the worst in light of the best, the radical democratic tradition.

When I look at our present moment, I see an unprecedented, lethal linkage of relative economic decline, undeniable cultural decay, and debatable political malaise. And relative economic decline, of course, brings out the worst in each and every one of us. The worst experience that one can have is feeling as if one cannot procure a foothold within an economy that is claimed to be undergoing recovery. The well-being of the majority of the American people, however, continues to decline. Deindustrialization and industrial flight leave the lives of working people -- especially industrial working people -- in disarray.

In 1960, 40 percent of young black men between 18 and 25 had decent paying industrial jobs; today it's 7 percent. That is only one effect among others of deindustrialization resulting in downward mobility. But this is not true solely for black people. You saw the report in the *Wall Street Journal* two months ago about black people being the only group that experienced a net loss of jobs. What they didn't go on to talk about was the decline in real, inflation adjusted wages for the majority of working people as a whole; the proliferation of part-time jobs with very little pension, if any pension at all; women going into the workforce in order to stay afloat, when their families are still together. Look at working people on the whole - given the takebacks, the negotiations between management and employees, and the impact of cutbacks in the social programs that were enacted in the 1980s.

We begin to look for scapegoats, and the traditional scapegoats in this country, as we know, have always been black folk, women, gay brothers, lesbian sisters, Jews, Catholics. The most vulnerable members of the national community are blamed for the downward mobility, and downward mobility produces rage. There's a lot of white male rage in Rush Limbaugh and white suburban rage in Ross Perot. I won't even begin to delve into the depths of the black rage, especially among the black working poor and very poor. I thought that the black middle class was smiling because we've got so many exceptional Negroes in America now, given the stereotypes and mass media: Arsenio, Oprah, Michael Jordan, professors at Harvard and Princeton, make white people feel comfortable with the sense of "Oh, we didn't struggle in the '60s for nothing; we've got some black folk who actually are making it." And it's true. Tremendous blood, sweat, and tears of black and white and red and Jewish folk in the sixties did produce a black middle class, or bourgeoisie, of about 20 percent of the black community, and that's significant.

There's still a lot of fury and anger, given the glass ceilings and upper echelons that exist in American society, and given the deep insecurities and anxieties that black middle-class folk themselves have vis-à-vis black working people and the working poor and very poor. In a speech

given a few weeks ago, President Clinton implied that the black middle class has the resources and capacities to fundamentally transform the social misery of black working people and working poor. What an implication. No middle class has ever fundamentally transformed the situation of its own lesser, disadvantaged folk. They've made a difference, but you've got government and you've got business.

Mr. Clinton, you're a friend of mine, but you've got to redefine the notion of what it means to be a prophet. You begin with a critique of the powers that be, and you demand personal responsibility and individual culpability of folk who are struggling. I like the passion that you put forward in terms of issues of race and poverty; we haven't seen that in the White House in a long time. It's a major step forward, but the critique still needs to be heard: A dialectical understanding of both circumstances and conditions, as well as a willingness to be critical of immoral responses to those circumstances and conditions, must be in place if there's going to be the kind of dialogue about race and poverty, gender and poverty, class and poverty, that will take us in a direction that will keep alive the best of the radical democratic tradition.

This relative economic decline that I was talking about is not simply a matter of downward mobility, but also, of course, a matter of recognizing that we're emerging from a kind of ice age when it comes to keeping track of the plight and predicament of ordinary people. You all know better than I about the massive transfer of wealth from ordinary persons to the ordinary well-to-do. The redistribution of wealth upward needs to be talked about explicitly; and yet, there are no serious public debates about these escalating levels of wealth inequality. In 1929, right before the so-called Great Crash, 1 percent of the population in America owned 44 percent of the household net wealth; today, 1 percent owns 38 percent, and 1 percent of the population owns 48 percent of the financial net wealth, which is different from household net wealth. But there's no serious discussion about it. And one doesn't engage in the transformation of that level of wealth inequality overnight, no doubt. It has to be within the contours of the Constitution and democratic processes, and there ought to be public debate about it. In 1976, 1 percent of the population owned 20 percent of household net wealth, one of the consequences of the social movements of the 1960s. Between 1962 and 1964, one half of all poor Americans were lifted out of poverty. That's something to be proud of. There were serious attempts to extend public debate such that ordinary persons could live lives of decency. We have a right to some dignity in the short time that we are here, and it is a class issue, it is a gender issue, and it is a racial issue.

...we live in one of the most frightening and terrifying moments in this history of this country... because the very forces that have undermined every democracy going back to Athens are accelerating.

This relative economic decline is inseparable from the country's undeniable cultural decay. The market culture and the culture of consumption are results of the erosion of the nurturing system of the family. By a culture of consumption, I mean a culture that tries to convince us that we ought to be addicted to stimulation and titillation; I mean a culture that promotes market morality and market mentalities and that makes market calculation central to

every transaction; a culture in which market forces saturate and permeate every nook and cranny of our lives. We can spend a long time talking about market politics, market religion, market relationships, and market education; we sell, we promote, we advertise. It just takes on a life of its own, on and on for market distribution and consumption.

Adam Smith recognized in his text of 1759, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, that a market culture cannot sustain a market economy. Contracts mean nothing without truth-telling and promise-keeping. In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith said that every market economy must have notions of sympathy, empathy, virtue, and propriety, because a market culture results in the gangsterization of life, and the gangsterization of life actually undermines the levels of efficiency and productivity that can flow from a market economy. Henry James said that American civilization was a hotel civilization, and what he meant by that was that Americans were preoccupied by two things: the warm security of the family, and the mobility and liquidity of the market. If we could just have both, but of course, both are suspicious of common good and public interest. John Dewey said it so well in his classic of 1927, *The Public and Its Problems*, when he said Americans are able to proliferate many publics, mini-publics, but when it comes to public life, we hold it at arm's length.

The most vulnerable members of the national community are blamed for the downward mobility, and downward mobility produces rage.

And yet, if there's a basic argument that I put forward tonight, it is that a vibrant democracy is predicated on a vital public life, but a vital public life presupposes a dynamic educational system in which persons not only gain access to skills but also are provided occasions for the acquiring of rich and deep notions of citizenship. And when, in fact, public life becomes barren and empty, you can rest assured that it is usually linked to more and more decrepit educational systems that are shot through with market orientations, or even private institutions that abdicate their public role, be it a Harvard, a prep school, or an academy in the suburbs. They still have public obligations and responsibilities in terms of shaping persons in such a way that notions of citizenship are operative.

This cultural decay, hedonism, narcissism, and privatism lead toward gaining access to power, pleasure, and property by any means. In such a context, how do we think about education? You all know the reports about young kids in inner cities: their lives being compared to those of children during World War II, with similar levels of hypertension, anxiety, distrust, and paranoia. Recent reports say that 41 percent of young black boys do not have best friends. I cannot imagine that, having grown up in segregated Sacramento, California, in the 1950s and '60s. My brother was my best friend; my father, my little league coach, my Sunday school teacher were my best friends. Can you imagine what it's like, in terms of the levels of paranoia and distrust, to not have anyone from whom to gain that kind of bond and support? That's just one of the consequences — not just the death, disease, and destruction that are ravaging so many inner cities, but this sense that life is fundamentally about gaining access to power, pleasure, and property any way you can. The nurturing system of the family is no longer; the neighborhoods are closely knit no longer; the influence of churches, mosques, and synagogues is waning, so the major forces of our society, television and film, fill in. I think

one of the most crucial moments of the 1980s was when television was deregulated, and a journalist asked a prominent member of the FCC, "What about the children?" He said, "The marketplace will take care of the children."

What a sad prophesy that, in some ways, has come true in such a vicious manner. So many of our children have become walking advertisements, with the shoes, pants, and shirts and their conceptions of the good life. The state of their souls have taken the form of their quest for products and commodities. If they are excluded, they gain access to them the same way they think others have in this country, vis-à-vis land — as in our image of America as a gunfighter nation. Some of the well-to-do violate the law and get around it. Forty-two (42) percent of the Fortune 500 in the last fourteen years have committed at least three or more significant illegalities. Lawlessness and corruption appear not just on the streets but in high places, in middle places, business, government; levels of dishonesty appear across the board, across race, region, class, sexual orientation. Why? Because nonmarket values of love, care, and concern are on the periphery. Tenderness, kindness, gentleness — who believes in those anymore? This is a social Darwinian struggle, it is survival of the fittest, and those particular values will get you in trouble. Justice, loyalty, commitment, trust, and community are things to be nostalgic about, things that social activists like to talk about.

Justice, loyalty, commitment, trust, and community are things to be nostalgic about, things that social activists like to talk about.

That's what we are up against, in part. You all live it every day, struggle against it every day. We still live, as most of you know, in the most racially segregated society in the world, with the exception of South Africa. We interact in the workplace, we ride the same subways and buses, but we often go to different places. Our social lives tend to be racially segregated, but not exclusivistic; we love to invite one another, but the dominant orientation is still deeply segregated. And yet our young people are hungry and thirsty for genuine interaction across races — not all, but most. By means of the vicarious experience, there's no doubt that the presence of black talent has played a crucial role in opening up possibilities. Can we constitute those public spaces through our institutions in civil society that resist the bombardment of those market forces, of which television is a major means? But in talking about TV, I don't want to cast television in monolithic or homogenous terms. The television industry, the entertainment industry, and the culture industry have their own internal battles, but the dominant ones are certainly ones in which sex and violence serve as the major sellable items. Our young people then think that the "good life" is in part just hooking up with a pleasure machine to live a life of comfort and convenience. Is it possible to actually get a hold of these larger forces, in light of keeping the radical democratic tradition alive, to seize the imagination of young people so that they're able to feel that life is much more than simply the market conception that bombards them everyday? This is partly a question for us — not just for young people, but for us.

As educators, our first task is to keep alive the art of public conversation. Public life takes a variety of different forms, if we talk about public infrastructure, bridges and roads, or about public provisions, especially for disadvantaged citizens. But public conversation is for

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educators; public conversation is not just name-calling or finger-pointing, it's not just the clash of identities, it's not just the bumping up of representatives of constituencies, it is an acknowledgment that the legacies of white and male supremacy, poverty, homophobia, still require us to accent a sense of public-mindedness in public spaces so that public conversation can actually take on a form that is requisite for regenerating any public life, which is a precondition for making a democracy vital. And how does one do that? I'll mention four quick features and then I'll stop.

First, we have got to try to infuse among ourselves and others, especially our young people, a deep and abiding sense of history. And that's very un-American. It is to radically cut against the grain. It cuts against the grain of a market culture, which holds the past at arm's length. Or, when one does hear about the past, it comes back through documentary history, in which icons are cast as isolated individuals with no link to organizations or movements. You get this in King and Malcolm among so many young people these days, as if you can separate King from SCLC and Malcolm from the Nation of Islam. Rather, these individuals are portrayed almost like deities, the way celebrities are in this culture. Taken out of the quotidian and the ordinary and put on a pedestal. How ahistorical can one get? In many ways, how dehumanizing can one get? To be rendered lifeless, like a statue, so that celebrities, heroes of the past, end up with the kind of status that separates and distances them from us, from ordinary folk. When I say ordinary folk, I mean each and every one of us.

The worst experience that one can have is feeling as if one cannot procure a foothold within an economy that is claimed to be undergoing recovery.

We need a deep and abiding sense of history, and that history ought to force us to recognize ambiguous legacies and hybrid cultures that might begin to lead us to break down some of the ethnic and racial enclaves, especially if that sense of history is linked to a sense of empathy. If you're in contact with the circumstances and conditions under which people have coped and do cope, you're more likely to stay in contact with their anxieties and their insecurities. A sense of history and empathy go hand in hand. That same deep and abiding sense of history also recognizes that we view the present as history. Every way that we keep the radical tradition alive makes a difference that can possibly hold off our sense of feeling impotent and helpless when we're overwhelmed by these larger market forces. What is so frightening is how the sense of impotence in the face of market forces becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy. And more and more people fall out — not so much give up, but feel as if the little bit that they are doing is so little that it is not making the difference that others around them can see. But the small victories are crucial. All of us want to save all the young people especially, but none of us can do that, can make a difference or fundamentally transform it overnight. I'd like to talk about it in terms of the love ethic. Simone Weil put it so well when she said that the love of thy neighbor and all of its fullness means being able to say to him or her, "What are you going through? How can I be of service?" The link again between remaining attuned to circumstance on the one hand and identifying with those who are struggling on the other. There can be no significant sustaining of struggle without a deep sense of history. That's

so very important.

One of the big differences between young people in the '60s and young people in the '90s is that the rage and the fury and the anger of the 1960s took the form of new organizations — SDS, SCLC, Black Panther Party, youth groups of the NAACP, youth groups in synagogues, youth groups in churches — the rage and the fury and the anger of the 1990s takes the form of marketing, hip-hop, rap, talk shows, radio, and TV. . . let's just market the rage. How very different, because when you organize and mobilize, you feel like something is actually being done. When you market it, you just allow it, you feed on it, you fuel it, you fan it, but there's no sense that you can get a handle on it, so it reinforces the spectatorial passivity that goes hand-in-hand with a market culture. And so we have to more radically cut across the grain.

Last, but not least, is what we educators are all about, self-criticism. Self-criticism is not a slogan, it's an act of courage. Real courage. You all recall what Nietzsche said, that intellectual engagement is not just a matter of having the courage of your conviction, but having the courage to attack your convictions. That is what's important. We tell our students an unexamined life is not worth living; then they discover that, if they remain engaged in education on a deep level, the examined life is painful, full of risk and vulnerability. But America is not about pain, it's about comfort. It's about feeling good, and self-criticism will not make you feel good. It will unsettle you, it will broaden your vision, it will lead toward certain experiences of emancipation and liberation. All of us have that experience in education; education about pushing oneself to the edge of life's abyss — that doesn't feel good. Look at death, despair, dread, and disease. Those are all facts of the human condition. It doesn't feel good to look at those in any deep sense, but that is in part what education is about. It doesn't feel good to try to constitute public conversation in a moment in which persons feel as if it is impossible for them to overcome their own narrow and parochial orientations. Self-criticism is an act of courage, and it is indispensable for this radical democratic tradition that I'm talking about to stay alive.

I believe in cutting against the grain, making a leap of faith beyond the evidence, because what we do can reshape the evidence over time.

There's just one last element that's necessary; and that's what I call "audacious hope." It's very different from optimism. I'm in no way optimistic. I don't believe that there's enough evidence out there to allow us to infer that things will get better. I believe in cutting against the grain, making a leap of faith beyond the evidence, because what we do can reshape that evidence over time. But hope is different from optimism. Hope has to do with making these Pascalian leaps of faith in the mental and moral capacities of ordinary people, ordinary children. Loving them enough, affirming them enough, criticizing them enough to convince them that they can make a difference; and over the long run, if they come together, they, along with others, might be able to regenerate democratic possibilities in a civilization that is in deep decline and decay.

I'm not speaking the language of doom and gloom, I'm speaking the language of decline and decay, which is something else. It can be turned around if a sense of audacious hope can energize and galvanize ordinary people and convince them once again to organize; mobilize; bring power and pressure to bear upon elites of all sorts — cultural elites, corporate elites,

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political elites — to render them accountable in some significant way. And if that is true, then I think we have lived up to the best of what this country is all about. Remember Abe Lincoln said, "God must love common folk, God made so many of them." I think he's right. Because once common folk reach the conclusion that the world is incomplete and that history is unfinished and that the future is open-ended, then things begin to move — social motions, social momentum, maybe even social movements. We saw it in the 1890s, we saw it in the 1930s, we saw it in the 1960s. Will we see it again in the 1990s? Let us hope that we see it in the most sophisticated forms we've ever had in this nation.

T.S. Eliot said it so well in the *Four Quartet*, "Ours is in the trying, the rest is not our business, we have a short time, we keep alive the best of a tradition, we don't save the world as a civilization, but we can fundamentally transform it." That's what kept Sojourner Truth going, that's what kept Miles Horton going, that's what kept Elizabeth Cady Stanton going, that's what kept John Dewey going. We can name many, and we should never forget the nameless and the anonymous. And if that's true, then let us keep going trying to democratize this democratic experiment to ensure that ordinary children as well as ordinary folk can live lives of decency and dignity.

Organizing Communities for Student Achievement*

by Ernesto J. Cortes, Jr.
Executive Director
Industrial Areas Foundation
and recipient of
the AAHE Education Trust's
Visions of Leadership Award

I want to thank you for inviting me to be here. Obviously, your interest in education is something that I share and admire, and your disposition and your willingness to challenge yourselves is something I hope we can both profit from. I hope we can engage in a mutually advantageous conversation, one that will challenge us to think differently and to develop a different concept of how to address this challenge of increasing student achievement among poor children we're so interested in.

Before I begin, I'd like to tell you a story about the IAF's work on increasing the number of after-school programs in the city...about an "action" in San Antonio that COPS (Communities Organized for Public Service) — our local organization — had with the mayor and the parks and recreation director, which was very interesting. The COPS leaders originally had asked the mayor and the parks and recreation director to more than double the number of after-school programs that were in existence at that particular time, which would have taken us from twenty-three programs to sixty. But those programs were so popular with parents, teachers, and principals, we wondered why we should stop at sixty. So COPS scheduled another big action with the mayor of San Antonio, and I suggested that they ask for 400 programs; they thought that was too many, so instead we settled on 200.

So COPS met with Mayor Wolfe and asked him, "Will you commit to setting up 200 of these after-school programs in the next city budget?" He felt that he couldn't say no, so he said

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*A presentation at AAHE's Fourth National Conference on School/College Collaboration, December 5-8, 1993, in Pittsburgh, Pa. © by the American Association for Higher Education, One Dupont Circle, Suite 360, Washington, DC 20036-1110; ph. 202/293-6440.

yes. The big story in the paper the next day was that the mayor of San Antonio had committed to 200 after-school programs. Afterwards, when he talked to the COPS leaders, he sort of gulped and said, "No, I meant not next year, but the year after that," which would have been when he was no longer mayor. But because he was on record as having committed to 200 programs, he was forced to find a way to deliver them. After he thought about it, he called the COPS leaders into a meeting and said, "I really like these after-school programs. They really do wonders; they're really good, and I want them to be my legacy. So here's what I want to do. I want to bring in the corporate leaders, and I want you to come into the meeting, because I want to run an action on them, like you did with me. I want to ask them to fund the other 200 programs so that we'll have an after-school program in every elementary and middle school in San Antonio." And so you see, everybody can learn, even Nelson Wolfe. And by God, he did it. So now the programs are on line, and he's real proud of himself for having done this. Every single elementary and middle school in San Antonio is now going to have an after-school program.

One of the things this story says to me is that all organizing is constant reorganizing. But I guess even more importantly, what it says to me is that ordinary people can develop capacity, wisdom, and real understanding if given an opportunity, if given some guidance and mentorship. And that's what people like Maribeth Larkin and Pearl Caesar and Christine Stephens and Robert Rivera and all the other IAF organizers do. What's not told enough is the fact that there's an extraordinary group of men and women — priests, ministers, rabbis, housewives, blue-collar workers — all kinds of people who are really not ordinary, even though they look and act ordinary, but who are quite extraordinary. Extraordinary in all kinds of different ways, extraordinary in their commitment, in their faith, extraordinary in the way in which they care about their children. But what is really extraordinary is their deep and abiding commitment to that which is profoundly significant about the American political tradition. And every time I wonder about this work, I ask myself, "Should I continue, or maybe get a real job?" . . . My kids ask me every once in a while, "Daddy, when are you going to get a real job like Mama has?" (My wife is a school librarian and she goes to work every day, has to punch a clock and that kind of good stuff that ordinary people do.) When I am going to get a real job? They're kidding, of course. They would just like me to be home more often. . . Whenever I think about that, and the capacity of those folks like the ones I just described, I always recognize how important it is to have faith in people.

Alinsky used to say that you can't organize, you cannot be an organizer, unless you have a deep abiding faith in people. He also warned us about the dangers of romanticizing poor people, romanticizing anybody. You've got to go with Rheinhold Niebuhr, who believed that all of us have an enormous capacity to be generous, to seek justice; but we also have this tremendous inclination to be self-centered, and that conflict, that tension — both metaphorically and symbolically — is what is meant by original sin. There's a dimension to that which is profoundly wise and insightful. And I do think that there also is such a thing as an original blessing, which gives us grace and hope. But nonetheless, even though we have this faith in people, we can't romanticize them. All we can hope for, Alinsky used to say, is that given the opportunity, given the tools, and given the resources, ordinary people will make the right decision 51 percent of the time. I don't want to back away from that risk.

There are no guarantees in any of the things that I'm about to talk about. There are only

inclinations, probabilities, and tendencies. But again, if you have faith in people, and if you provide them with the right tools, they will make the right decision 51 percent of the time. And that's about all we can hope for. Unfortunately, right now, they make the right decision sometimes 10 and 15 percent of the time. And the question is: Why? The answer is complicated. We live in turbulent times. We live in very difficult times. I'm very proud of the work IAF has done in the Southwest and in the nation as a whole. I'm very proud of the work that people like Maribeth Larkin and other IAF organizers have been able to do in El Paso, in Tuscon, Phoenix, and Albuquerque. I've been real proud of the success of broad-based organizations in developing what we call mini-universities, which teach ordinary people about public life and about public skills. And the results are outstanding, whether it's $250 million from the state of Texas for water and sewer services for the Colonias, or after-school programs in San Antonio, or summer jobs for youth in Austin, or improved public schools around the Southwest.

One of the photographs in the film we just saw [the PBS special *From the Bottom Up*] was of myself and some of the COPS leaders with a fellow named H. Ross Perot. That was back in 1983, when COPS and H. Ross Perot entered into a very interesting — maybe unholy, maybe dubious, but successful — alliance to get more than a billion dollars' worth of new tax dollars for property-poor school districts in the state of Texas. The other IAF organizations were a successful part of that effort, and frankly, that is how we began, in a very systematic way, to really think about public education. Even in the beginning of COPS, we were involved in that kind of struggle, everything from sidewalks to making sure kids could get to school when we had bad flooding problems.

...some economists say that 60 percent of the labor force is on a downward escalator.

I remember one of our best actions took place in a huge drainage ditch, when COPS leaders took on the city public works director and demanded to know when the drainage ditch -- which was right alongside the major thoroughfare in Edgewood, where kids had to walk to school, and into which kids sometimes would fall and would need ambulances to rescue them — was going to get covered. There were also live electrical wires along the road and school roofs that leaked. Those were some of the issues COPS was involved in from the beginning of the organization. There were all kinds of beginning efforts in and around schools.

Yet, with the extra money from the 1983 work with Ross Perot, we found ourselves forced to ask some hard questions. The extra money wasn't enough, it wasn't fair, and it wasn't equalized, but it was some extra money, and we had to show results. We began to ask some hard questions about what was going on in public schools and what the difficulties were. As we began to look at it, it also forced us to look at what was going on in the country as a whole.

I don't want to bore you with some of this stuff, because you've heard it from other people. But I just want to contextualize what I want to say by telling you that what we discovered was that things were changing very rapidly in the United States. Technology was changing, the economy was changing. And as technology and the economy were changing, as was the composition of our economic activity, or, as economists call it, the composition of aggregate demand. We were moving from a goods-producing society based on manufacturing

to one that was based on services. And that meant, of course, that the requirements for the "good life," the requirements for a decent home, all of those were changing. Peter Drucker dramatically crystallized this for me when he said that in 1945, it was an economically irrational decision for a white male to get a high-school education. The average white male could get the same job with a fifth- or sixth-grade education as he could with a high school diploma, and that wasn't a bad job, that was a good job. That was a suburban job that would produce a suburban income and a suburban household for him and his family. And of course, all of this has changed.

Since 1973, there has been a dramatic decline in the real wages of the average American worker. Lester Thurow wrote an article in a magazine called the New Perspectives Quarterly. He said that in 1980, the census bureau did a survey of all males 18 to 25 years old and found that 20 percent of them earned less than the poverty wage. Now these were not males who were part-time employees, these were not males who were unemployed; these were males who were fully employed, forty hours a week, fifty-two weeks a year. In 1990, the census bureau did a study of the same cohort, and that 20 percent figure was up to 40 percent. And according to most labor economists I know, that figure is going to get larger. It's not going to be 40 percent, it's going to be 45 percent and maybe even 50 percent. In fact, some economists say that 60 percent of the labor force is on a downward escalator.

I don't understand how America can survive as a great country, a great civilization, without two basic institutions: cities and quality public schools.

It's ironic that at the same time this is occurring, the top 40 percent are making out like gang-busters. Everybody in this room and others like you are going to do very well in the economy of the twenty-first century. For people who get a college education and become what Robert Reich calls "symbolic analysts," the future is virtually — not totally, but virtually — assured. You might have bad luck here and there, you might get downsized, but by and large, people who have what the British call tertiary education are going to do very well. But the bottom half of the labor force is on a downward escalator, and that became clearer to me during this whole debate over the North America Free Trade Agreement.

There are two labor forces in the United States. There's the labor force that Lester Thurow says is complementary to NAFTA: people like yourselves; people who are in banking, finance; people who are involved in machines that make machines; people who are involved in all the kind of sophisticated technology about which you can think — information technology, design, etc. They all are going to do extraordinarily well with NAFTA. But, then there's another labor force in the United States, the bottom half, and that's the dirty little secret. That bottom half of the labor force is not complementary, they're competitive. There's a fancy term that economists use — "price equalization," which essentially means that there will be a tendency for the income of the bottom half of the labor force to equalize with that of workers in the Republic of Mexico. There are a lot of other factors we could talk about, but primarily what this means to me is that NAFTA is going to exacerbate the already-existing trends that are reducing the wages of people who lack high-skill training and education. This is why public

education, and particularly its connection to higher education, is so critical.

So what do we at the IAF about that, if that's the reality? Well, we're not professional educators, you are. We're organizers, and what we do know is how to teach people to organize effectively. We teach people about politics.

It's very important here to be clear, because one of the other dimensions of the crisis that we're facing is that even though politics is important and necessary, we don't do politics anymore in this country. Every four years we have what I call a quadrennial electronic plebescite. It has nothing to do with politics. It has everything to do with marketing. In fact, there's a woman by the name of Kathleen Hall Jamison who studies presidential politics, and she says to her students, "If you want to know about politics, do not study political science; particularly, don't study political theory, because if you come to us and let us teach you, we will teach you irrelevant things. We will teach you about Aristotle and Montesquieu and the founding fathers. We will teach you about checks and balances, and that's not what you need to know if you want to do politics. What you need to know if you want to do electioneering is how to run marketing campaigns. What you need to know is opinion polls, direct mail. You need to know how to do attack videos."

That's what our politics is all about today; that's what our electoral activity is all about. It has nothing to do with the substance of real politics, which is debate, public discourse, negotiations, arguing, serious conversations. So the IAF is the counterculture because that's what our organizations are trying to teach people.

We're trying to teach ordinary people who want to learn, who have this hunger to learn how to understand issues that are important to their interests, how to understand the dimensions of them, because they would like to be able to participate in an interesting and meaningful way in the deliberations and the decisions. And people want to learn these things! Now, they don't want to participate in formal structures that talk about tasks and preconceived assignments. They don't want to participate in what some people call opinion formation, which has to do with opinion polls and taking their pulse. They don't want to participate in glorified focus groups. They do want to participate in a deliberative process. And if you don't believe me, I invite all of you to come and look at public education in El Paso, and I urge some of you to come and watch the way that the EPISO organization, as other IAF organizations do, tries to figure out what to do and how to do it.

The way they do that is to use a very simple democratic tool called the "house meeting." These are small, democratic, group meetings where ordinary people come together to try to learn, to try to understand, to deliberate, and to chew on the most sophisticated and important notions of public education. But house meetings are just one aspect of this whole question, because what we're about in organizing people is trying to teach not just about politics, but about power.

Let me come back to this whole notion of schools and why they're important, before I get into the question of power. I don't understand how America can survive as a great country, a great civilization, without two basic institutions — cities and quality public schools. I don't understand how we can have a civilization without that organizing network of institutions, culture, education, and work that is the American city. I don't understand that, and I'm probably old-fashioned. And by cities, I mean where people engage in public activity. Nor do I understand how we can possibly maintain a great civilization without a common school, which

I understand is the Jeffersonian ideal of public education.

It is the common school that prepares people for the workplace of the twenty-first century, and that's important for people's lives and for the future of the country. But as I understand the Jeffersonian notion and ideal of the common school, it is also where we learn what the United States is all about. It is where we learn the values of a free and open society. It's where we learn about tolerance and pluralism and due process and all those things that are central to America, not our malls and commercial activity. And without that institution, where do people learn about American culture and American values? And where, most importantly, do people learn about citizenship and what it means to be a citizen? And by citizen, I mean not someone who just has a bundle of needs and wants and rights, but also someone who has obligations and responsibilities, ideas, imagination, and curiosity. Where do people learn how to connect their interests, their values, their stories, to that which is fundamentally meaningful about the human condition?

...if we don't begin to develop a different understanding of power and leadership inside the schools, we can never change the culture of the schools.

One of my favorite authors is a fellow by the name of Alfred North Whitehead, who wrote an essay called "The Aims of Education." I like that essay because Whitehead has two very important notions in that essay: One is the concept of the danger of inert ideas. Whitehead suggested that most education is about stuffing people with inert ideas, or most of what passes for education is about stuffing kids' heads full of ideas that are dead, information that is useless, disconnected facts and figures that have no meaning and no significance and that children will never find useful. Whitehead abhors the idea that we would spend time and energy trying to transmit information that is not fundamentally useful to kids, so he talks about the danger of inert ideas. Ideas that cannot be thrown into fresh combinations, ideas that are not useful.

One of the reasons why I like organizing so much is because there is this curiosity, and there is imagination among the parents and the community people that we encounter. There is a willingness to grapple with ideas that are useful to their children and to their communities. When we begin to talk with parents and community people about the culture of schools, and to suggest to them that, notwithstanding the fact that there are enormous numbers of teachers and principals and administrators who are committed to teaching their children, the culture of the school is dysfunctional, the culture of schools is inimical to learning, that resonates with them. Why? Because that's part of their own experience. It's also part of their own experience in the workplace, it's part of their own experience in the universities, it's part of their own experience in every other institution. Because notwithstanding our commitment to liberal society and openness in humanity, most of our institutions tend to operate in such a way that perpetuates what I call "learned helplessness." They teach people incompetence. They teach passivity. They operate from a perspective of what we call "unilateral power."

The famous Lord Acton, who tangled with the Vatican, warned us that power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. It's one of the reasons why some of us don't even want to talk about power, because this has been pounded into our heads. But he wasn't

talking about the folks at COPS, or at EPISO, or you or me. He was talking about the power of the first Vatican council -- power that was unaccountable and inaccessible. And we should be wary of that kind of power -- the power that shrouds itself in magic and mystery. This is the power of bureaucrats and lawyers and economists, and all the different kinds of language that prevent ordinary people from understanding or participating. These people use the language of "the common good" or "the general welfare" or "average incomes" to say to ordinary people, "Oh, what you want is a special interest, what you want is not for the common good." Under the magic and mystery of their "expertise," and under the mystifying effect of their language, developers get subsidies for their development projects on the north side of San Antonio, and the poor people on the south and west sides bear an inordinate portion of the costs of that change. Don't misunderstand me, in a dynamic economy there's got to be change. But the bottom half of the labor force should not have to pay a portion of the costs that is disproportionate to the benefits they receive from that change. There ought to be some equity in the cost distribution.

Now, we can't ask -- or make -- poor people pay the brunt of our moving into the twenty-first century economy unless we can show them that their children and grandchildren are going to directly benefit. If we're going to make the bottom half of the labor force pay for these changes, then we have to make sure that the kind of necessary changes in education, health care, and so forth are guaranteed for their children -- so that *they* will be ready for that twenty-first century. We know that the average 50-year-old who has worked on a manufacturing line or even in middle management all of his/her life is not likely to be successfully retrained as a symbolic analyst. These dynamic changes will and are costing them dearly. But what we do know is that they will be willing to bear the costs of change if we can demonstrate -- through better schools, better after-school care, better health care -- that their children will be successful in the new economy.

...being an educational leader means building a collaborative relationship among teachers and... between teachers and parents.

And that's what we have to do. Now, we're not going to do it unless we begin to recognize the way in which unaccountable power, unilateral power, dominates and is pervasive in our educational institutions. You can't talk about collaborative strategies, you can't talk about listening to the voice of ordinary people, until you understand the obstacles to collaboration. I'd like to frame this discussion by talking about two styles of leadership: There's a style of leadership of learned helplessness, of power that is hierarchical and domineering. And then there's another style of leadership, which we call the Iron Rule: Never do for anyone what they can do for themselves.

In the *Brothers Karamazov,* there's a chapter called the "Grand Inquisitor" — remember that story? In the Grand Inquisitor story, Christ comes back to Earth during the middle of the Spanish Inquisition. He's immediately recognized by all the people, but he's also recognized by the Grand Inquisitor, who has him thrown in jail. He comes to see Christ in the dead of night and asks him, "Why did you come back? We tried it your way!" For hundreds of years we offered people freedom, we offered people opportunity. They don't want to make choices, they don't want to be responsible. They want to be fed, they want to be taken care of. They want

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magic and mystery and authority in their lives. So we made a decision. We had to go over to the other guy, and we had to accept the deal that you rejected. And in your name, without changing one word of what you had written, we've given people food, clothing. We've guided them, we've taught them. Now that's a strategy of leadership that I call learned helplessness. That's the strategy of leadership that says, "We're the expert. We know best." That's a strategy of leadership that leads to the guardian state. And that's the strategy of leadership that alienates ordinary people from participation. Educators use it; bureaucrats use it; priests use it; organizers sometimes use it; lawyers, in particular, use it.

There's another style of leadership that's exhibited in the *Book of Numbers*. I like the story of Moses, because Moses and Paul, for me, were the two greatest organizers. They trusted the people to find their way. At IAF, we believe in the same theories of individual capacity and collaboration. We get the people together in small groups, organize them in house meetings. Each one of them has a little bit of time and talent and energy. If you mentor them and teach them and agitate them, then they'll develop some understanding, and they'll begin to do little actions.

They'll organize around a street or drainage ditch, but that's not what's important. What's important is that they learn how to trust one another. They learn how to build relationships. They begin to learn the Iron Rule. They begin to understand mutuality and reciprocity — I'll work with you on your education project if you'll work with me on my housing project. And after a while, you begin to build trust. They begin to learn relational power which is transformative and builds networks of relationships. What we have learned is that if we don't begin to develop a different understanding of power, and leadership inside the schools, we can never change the culture of schools.

All over Texas, we have principals who are effective and well-meaning, but they are compliance officers. They fill out forms, do proposals, and so, as a result, we have institutions and schools that are overadministered and underled. They have no concept that being an educational leader means building a collaborative relationship among teachers and collaborative relationships between teachers and parents. They have no concept of how to go about building trust among people who are suspicious and disconnected. And they don't understand that the reason why people are mistrustful is that they have been taught to be mistrustful, cynical, and suspicious. You can't talk about collaboration until you have educators who see themselves as agitators. What I mean by agitation is raising questions, which means you have to deal in the beginning with people's anger, misgivings, and mistrust. You have to understand that those feelings don't get worked through except in meaningful, deliberative action that enables people to identify who they are.

Our only hope, in my opinion, for revitalizing public education in the United States is if we begin to realize something very clearly. In Texas, fewer than 30 percent of taxpaying adults have kids in pubic schools. We can't support public education with just the parents of the kids who are actually in those schools. We have to include those others in our work to revitalize the schools or it will never happen. But beyond that, I have three children, among them an eleven-year-old son; I would like for him to live to be an adult, but I know that the world of our inner cities is a violent one. It is in my interest for my children to grow up in a different kind of world. We have got to make everyone understand that it is in all of our interests for all children to be educated. We also have to understand that they cannot be educated all by

themselves -- or just by their teachers, or even just by their parents. It takes only two people to create a child, but it takes the whole community to educate and raise that child.

A Call to Action: Thinking — and Acting — K-16*

by Kati P. Haycock
Director, The Education Trust
American Association for Higher Education

I want to join Carol in welcoming you to Pittsburgh. We are very glad that you've all been willing to give up both part of your weekend and part of your work week to share with us your own expertise — and to plot alongside of us about how to build much stronger and much better support structures to help teachers and schools in their efforts to improve student achievement. We are especially glad that so many teachers from all education levels have joined us for these three days. We honor you as teachers and we are very glad you're here, because we need your wisdom.

As Carol said, over the next three days, you will have plentiful opportunities both to share what you know and to learn from others about the kind of professional development that truly makes a difference. Along the way, you will be engaged in thinking through some of the most challenging issues in the field, including the right combination of whole school versus individual teacher professional development; the most important roles for higher education within this whole milieu; and, we hope, the changes that we in higher education must make not only to support, encourage, and reinforce what is going on in elementary and secondary education but also to improve our own student outcomes. We call this "K-16 Thinking," and we'll talk about it this entire three days.

Lest we, like other conferees before us, go hurtling into these complex professional and systems issues never to return to what matters most — and that is the children themselves -- let me be very clear up front about what in particular has brought us here together, about what motivates this group at AAHE that we call the Education Trust. We believe in three things: (1) that the young people of America can indeed learn to think, to communicate, and to compute

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*A presentation at AAHE's Fourth National Conference on School/College Collaboration, December 5-8, 1993, in Pittsburgh, Pa. © by the American Association for Higher Education, One Dupont Circle, Suite 360, Washington, DC, 20036-1110; ph. 202/293-6440.

at much higher levels than they do at the present time; (2) that minority and low-income students, in particular, absolutely can achieve at the same levels as anybody else; and (3) that we educators in both K-12 and in higher education have a moral responsibility to accept nothing less. Simply put, we refuse to settle for the rate of progress that we have at the present time, and we will work as hard as we can to help connect the two systems in a simultaneous effort to improve student outcomes.

Sadly, though, as I think all of you know only too well, those goals are being undermined every single day by the literally intolerable conditions that we are inflicting on our children. About one in five American children, more than twelve million in all, currently is growing up in poverty. Children are by far the poorest of all Americans — in fact, more than twice as poor as any other age group. And they've grown a good deal poorer during the last decade while our nation grew a good deal richer. Similarly, one in six American children has no health insurance whatsoever, meaning that small, preventable problems often grow into large, lifetime disabilities. The outrageous fact is that we don't even bother to immunize many of the children in this country anymore. Non-white one-year-olds in America are now less likely to be fully immunized against polio than are children in forty-seven other countries, including Albania, Botswana, Sri Lanka, and Colombia. Crime and violence, as many of you know, have become a daily, even hourly, companion for the children in our cities. Indeed, every single day of the school year, approximately one hundred thirty-five thousand American children arrive at school for the day with a gun, and about twelve of our children are shot dead with guns in this country every single day.

About one in five American children, more than twelve million in all, currently is growing up in poverty.

You can see some of the price that we are paying for neglecting our children when you look at achievement levels among American children and compare them with achievement in countries that invest systematically in the development of not just a few, but <u>all</u> of their children. As all of you know only too well, most international tests place American children at or near the bottom among industrialized nations. And a lot of corporate executives in this nation are claiming to spend sleepless nights worrying about the impact of that over time on our international competitiveness. But even if you are not among those who worry about international competitiveness, it's very important that you ask yourselves how you feel about the fact that at age seventeen, only about half of the young people in this country can do a mathematics problem that requires them to use a decimal, a fraction, or a percent. Fewer than one half of the seventeen-year-olds in this country can read a paragraph in a reasonably simple text, like an encyclopedia, and then explain to you what they've just read. And only about a quarter of the seventeen-year-olds in this country can write even a reasonably persuasive letter that takes a position on something and then mounts some arguments in support of that position.

Put a little bit differently, at age nine, virtually all of the children in this country can name for you the ships in Columbus's armada, but only a few can tell you why he sailed. At age thirteen, virtually all of the young people in this country can tell you exactly how Abraham Lincoln died, but only a few can tell you why he fought the Civil War. And at age seventeen,

while virtually all of the young people in this country claim that they have heard of the Panama Canal, only a few can tell you whether it shortened the sailing time from New York to San Francisco or from New York to London. In short, we have been reasonably successful in equipping young people with isolated facts, but very unsuccessful to date in helping them with the more important matters of using their mind, of understanding the concepts and the ideas that hold all these facts together and make them interesting.

And if you think those numbers are worrisome — and I hope you do — you ought to see the numbers on poor and minority students. Though these youngsters enter school only slightly behind other youngsters, no matter what index of achievement you use, the gap that separates them from other young Americans grows dramatically as they progress through the grades. By third grade, the average minority or poor student is already six months behind. By the time they reach sixth grade, they're one year behind. By the time they reach eighth grade, they're about two years behind. And by the time they reach grade twelve, if they do so at all, the average minority or poor youngster in this country is at least three years behind. In fact, according to the most recent data available from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, black and Latino students at age seventeen have, on average, skills in English, in mathematics, and in science about the same as the average white thirteen-year-old. Not, by the way, because they were born brain damaged, or because their parents don't care, or because they cannot learn for some other reason. But because, by and large, we don't even bother to teach these youngsters the things we include in our tests or that we otherwise value as a nation.

Among all the human service professionals, only educators have either held or improved their ground despite the deteriorating conditions of children.

Now, the outrageous part of all of this is that it does not have to be this way. There are around this country schools that are proving every single day of the school year that these kids absolutely can achieve at the same high levels as anybody else if they are taught at those levels, if they are challenged with rich and rigorous material, and if they are provided with the help that they need to get there. But, as you have seen in your own work, far too few poor and minority students are educated with any kind of challenge these days. Instead, many of them spend their days in boring classrooms, circling M's and P's on ditto after ditto after ditto.

In fact, these kids get less of everything that we believe makes a difference in education. They get less in the way of experienced and well-trained teachers, less in the way of a rich and well-balanced curriculum, less in the way of well-equipped and well-stocked laboratories and libraries, and less of what undoubtedly makes the very biggest difference of all — a belief that they really can learn.

What we do in American education is this: We herd poor and minority students either into separate schools, or, within schools, into separate tracks, where we water virtually everything down. We assign them our least well-prepared teachers, our oldest books, and then expect essentially nothing from them. It is hardly surprising, then, that these youngsters do less well on any test of achievement you choose, because the fact of the matter is that we teach them a good deal less.

The combination of these two factors that I've just talked about, both the lesses in some of our schools and the lesses in some of our communities, are simply devastating for most poor and minority students in this country, because most are nowhere near mastering the kinds of knowledge and skills that they need and that we need them to have. In fact, there is now such a huge gap between the images of affluence that children are bombarded with every hour of every day and the painful realities of some of their own lives — low skills, stressed-out families, no connections to the broader community — that many of the youngsters in this country have stopped dreaming this thing that we call the American dream.

Not too long ago, I was out in Indianapolis visiting with a group of teachers, and at the end of the day, a teacher pulled me aside and asked if she could talk with me about a student in her fourth-grade classroom. This was a young man whose name was Robert. She told me that Robert was one of those kids whom you just can't figure out. She was convinced that this young man had real potential, but she couldn't seem to get him to engage. She'd give a homework assignment, he wouldn't do it. She'd give an in-class assignment, he'd find a way not to do that either. No matter what she tried, she hadn't seemed to be able to connect with him.

What we have now is a whole lot of kids who've simply stopped dreaming.

She told me that, on the day prior to my visit to Indianapolis, she had asked Robert to stay after school and talk with her. It had occurred to her that if she could find out what Robert wanted to be when he grew up, and then systematically connect that to what was going on in her fourth-grade classroom, then she would be able to get him to understand why school was so important.

So she told me that Robert had indeed stayed after school with her in the classroom. They sat at the back of the classroom on a couple of small chairs and she said, "Robert, what do you want to be when you grow up?" Robert's eyes stayed focused on the floor the whole time and he was quiet for a little while. Finally, he shook his head and said, "Nothing." She said, "Oh, come on, Robert, you've got to want to be something. Do you want to be a lawyer? a doctor? a teacher? a firefighter? What do you want to be?" His eyes again stayed focused on the floor, he shook his head again and said, "Nothing." So she said, "Okay, Robert, I want you to close your eyes really tight, I want you to visualize yourself all grown up. What are you Robert? What do you see?" So Robert closed his eyes really tight and he was quiet again for a long time, and finally he said, "I don't see nothin' Miss Greenbaum, I don't see nothin'."

Now, Miss Greenbaum's question to me was, "What do you do when a kid simply stops dreaming?" As I struggled for an even partially adequate response, my mind went to Langston Hughes's words immortalized in *A Raisin in the Sun:* "Whatever happens to a dream deferred, does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?" And I thought to myself, you know, back then we thought that the worst thing that could happen to children in this country was dreams deferred. But what we have now is a whole lot of kids who've simply stopped dreaming.

We should think a little bit this afternoon about what life will be like for these youngsters when they grow, if they grow up. And think a little bit about what life would be like in a country that has not just a few youngsters who no longer dream, but a whole lot of youngsters who've simply stopped dreaming.

Changing things for these youngsters, for the Roberts of our world, will require work on a number of fronts, there's no question about it. It will indeed require improvements in health care; expansion in child care, Head Start, and child nutrition programs; and greater connection among these disparate services. It's very important that those of us who are educators add our voices to those of other child advocates who are pushing for expansions in those very important services for children.

But as we educators add our voices to those of other child advocates on broad issues of child well-being, it is vitally important that we remember that we ourselves, as K-12 and college educators, hold within our own hands the power to make changes more important than any other. More important than changes in child care, more important than changes in housing, more important even than changes in health care. Because nothing is more important than changing and improving our public education system. For no other system touches all of our children, and no other system is capable of helping them both to dream real dreams for their future and to master the knowledge and skills that they need to make those dreams a reality. Nobody else can do that for the children of America, so we must.

As K-12 and college educators, [we] hold within our own hands the power to make changes more important than any other.

The question, of course, is how do you proceed? As all of you know, we have already done nearly a decade of work on improving American public schools. While that work has not yet begun to produce the kind of results that we had hoped for and that we continue to seek, it has yielded very important understandings — lessons, if you will — for our work together that lies ahead. What are those lessons?

The first lesson is a lesson about programs. As most of you know, we have chosen as a nation to respond to the changing student population in this country by adding onto our system a patchwork of band-aid programs. Rather than changing the way we do business, we simply tack on extra programs to the outside of otherwise unchanged institutions. Some schools, especially urban schools, have as many as ninety special programs, fragmenting students' education, robbing them of the coherence that they long for, and robbing many educators — teachers and administrators — of a real sense of responsibility for the achievement of these students. And what have we learned about the results of these programs? They do indeed have benefits for a handful of students. But for most students, no matter how wonderful the design or materials, or how terrifically dedicated the staff, you cannot compensate in twenty minutes a day, or two hours a week, or four weeks during the summer, for the effects of watered-down instruction the rest of the school day and school year. Like additions to a house built on a crumbling foundation, these extras can never achieve their intended purpose.

The same is true, of course, about many programs for teachers. As most of you know, virtually every college in the country now serves as a home for a wide range of programs for teachers. One single campus might serve twenty math teachers in a summer institute, thirty writing teachers during the year in a series after-school workshops, and so on down the line. Often, each of these programs is quite wonderful in and of itself. But, as with students, most of these programs do not add up to a coherent whole. They provide neither the follow-up nor

the attention to problems within the school organization that is truly necessary if you're going to sustain good practice at the school. Somehow we must find a way to get beyond this programmatic mentality. Instead of simply working to build good programs, we must work to build good schools and good systems.

Lesson number two is really a set of lessons, both from education and from other sectors, about how you go about building those good systems. About the need for clarity in the beginning and where you want to get in the end. About the standards or goals that you have for student achievement. About the need to assess regularly progress toward those standards. About the need to decentralize authority and empower building-level educators with the responsibility to make key decisions about the education of their children. And about the very important need to change the incentive system so that we reinforce and reward good practice and improved results. Simply put, that lesson says that you don't change systems in a piecemeal way.

Lesson number three, and one that is just now beginning to dawn on most of the educational reform movement, is that no matter how hard we try, we absolutely cannot bring about significant changes in elementary and secondary education without also changing higher education. I have to confess that I came a little late to this idea. It took a little while for this to sink in to my own thick head. When I left the University of California system some years ago for K-12, I really thought — as do many still within higher education — that if we only figured out how to fix what was going on in elementary and secondary education, all of our own problems, especially problems like minority student success in college, would simply go away.

What I did not realize then, however, was how intertwined these two systems really are. I did not understand, in particular, how many central tasks of the elementary and secondary reform effort depend almost completely on the involvement of higher education.

Take, for example, the mounting evidence that many teachers in elementary and secondary education do not themselves meet the standards for the performance of seventeen-year-olds that are now being set by the national disciplinary organizations of teachers. Who is going to help to deepen the subject-matter knowledge of those teachers — and there are lots of them — if higher education sits on the sidelines? And what about new teachers? There is a serious question for us: Are we going to continue stamping our seal of approval on new teachers who have neither the mastery of content, the mastery of pedagogy, or the belief systems that will enable them to be successful with all of their students?

Of course, there is also the matter of college admissions, and in particular, the growing mismatch between what we measure (seat-time, Carnegie units, grades, standardized test scores) and where K-12 is now headed — toward a clear specification of standards for student work, toward assessment of students' performance against those standards, and toward portfolios of student work. This mismatch between our two systems is already sending very confusing signals to teachers, to kids, and to their parents, and it can and will have a chilling effect on reform efforts in elementary and secondary education.

And speaking of chilling effects, there is also within this admissions question the very important matter of incentives for students to meet these new, high, challenging performance standards. Many of our colleagues in K-12 are now telling us unequivocally that no matter what they do, what they try, their students will have no reason to work hard to meet the new standards if we in higher education continue to admit anybody who can fog a mirror. Clearly, if this effort to improve elementary and secondary education is to succeed, instead of crumbling

and fading away, we in higher education must begin NOW to think through the many ways in which our system and our own practices actually impede the elementary and secondary reform effort. And we must change those practices.

In truth, of course -- though I'm not going to go into this in a lengthy way -- it is also important that those of us in higher education realize that there is even more within our borders that we must change. Our own student outcomes often make the outcomes in K-12 look wonderful by comparison. Our dropout rates, for example, are much worse than those of the worst urban high school district. Higher education takes a much narrower range of students in the first place, but we manage to graduate an even smaller fraction than K-12 does. Of high school graduates in the top quarter of their class, most enter college but fewer than one half graduate.

And what about students of color? The truth is that we take the very best that schools and communities have to offer, the kids whom they consider their success stories, and we send many of them home by Christmas. Over the past two decades, while we opened our doors to more of these students, we have not graduated any more. Our success rates are actually lower now than they were a decade ago.

We absolutely cannot bring about significant changes in elementary and secondary education without also changing higher education.

And what do college graduates actually learn in college? What do they actually know when they graduate? A recent NAEP report provides some scary insights: Nearly one in five college graduates cannot use a calculator to figure out the difference between the regular and the sale prices in an advertisement in the local paper. One in five college graduates also cannot calculate the number of miles per gallon a car gets, even if given a chart that has all the necessary information on it. And nearly one half of college graduates can't state in writing the main argument of a lengthy newspaper article, or determine correct change using prices from a menu. That's a little bit scary. The fact is that we have got to get beyond the mythology that we have a perfect higher education system and a terribly flawed K-12 system. Hodgkinson calls it a "Brooks Brothers" higher-education system and a "Robert Hall" K-12 system. The truth is really quite different. It's vitally important that we admit that both of us have problems with student outcomes, and that we need each other's help if we're going to improve those outcomes.

The question, of course, is where do you begin with a reform task of this magnitude? Over the past two years, we at the Education Trust have had the wonderful good fortune to work alongside leaders in ten cities, education and community leaders, who have been trying to launch simultaneous reform efforts in both K-12 and higher education. Along the way, we have seen the incredible energy that is released when these two systems are joined and harnessed. And we've become so impressed with what can happen with this sort of K-16 approach to reform that we're now working with another sixteen cities where community and education leaders have decided that they, too, see the need for simultaneous reform of both systems.

Each of the cities that we have been working with has a little bit of a different flavor

because all of them have different histories. In Philadelphia, for example, both the school system and Temple University have decided that it's very important, especially for the urban children and young people they both serve, to break down these large impersonal education systems into much smaller and more personal learning communities. Both systems now are beginning to organize teachers and students into small, potent learning communities, each organized around a particular theme or central idea. El Paso has gone down another very interesting track, both in summer institutes and during the year: Universities serve as hosts to teams of teachers and principals who are trying to turn their schools around and improve student achievement levels. There, math faculty are working with math teachers to decide together the outcomes they want and how to achieve them. The Industrial Areas Foundation's local group, called EPISO, is working with the school folks on how to organize parents in very new ways to support the education of their own children, as well as with the School of Education to make sure that future teachers and future principals know how to engage and organize parents.

In Pueblo, Colorado, we have one of the most interesting structural arrangements of all: The University of Southern Colorado and the local school district have literally merged. The superintendent of schools is now a vice president of the university; the two institutions have a single purchasing process, a single physical plant department, and a single printing operation. The combined entity is moving toward a pre-K-to-graduate-school planning process and educational continuum that we think has real potential to change things for the many poor Latino students in the Pueblo area.

Although their approaches differ somewhat, all of the cities have really come together to more clearly define the essential pieces of a systems-reform strategy, a set of "core tasks" that all of them must achieve. I want to tell you what they've said about these core tasks:

- The first task is to establish **clear, high goals and standards**. Through a process led by our faculties, but involving the broader community, we will clearly describe our goals and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that we value and that we commit to developing in all of our students.
- Task number two is **assessing and reporting progress**. Dissatisfied with the limits of current tests, we will develop better ways of assessing progress toward the standards, and we are committed to reporting regularly and clearly to the students, parents, and the community at large.
- The third task has to do with **being clear about authority and responsibility**. In each of these ten cities, we will significantly reduce central control over the process of education, shifting our focus from inputs to outcomes. Faculty and administrators at the school/department level must be responsible for getting increasing numbers of their students to the standard, for removing unnecessary barriers to student success, and therefore for decisions about curriculum, instructional strategies, time, budget, and personnel.
- Task number four is to establish **support structures.** Because professionals and students will need assistance to meet these new standards of performance, we will create support structures to assure that all students, teachers, administrators, and parents have the high-quality assistance they need to be successful.
- The fifth task is **accountability**. We will develop an accountability system that

sends clear, unequivocal messages backed with real consequences to schools, departments, professionals, and students. Our system will reward effort and accomplishment, provide help to those who need it, and sanction or assure change in schools or other instructional units that repeatedly fail to make adequate progress with student achievement.

These again are the five central tasks of systems reform that communities have agreed to tackle, kindergarten through graduate school. Now, some of you may question the selection of those tasks. You may say, "Wait a second, these kids who are coming into our schools — and, increasingly, into our colleges — have all kinds of social problems that they bring with them into the classroom. What they really need is counseling and all that kind of stuff."

Every time that I am in the company of those who argue that what these kids need are not high standards and intellectually challenging instruction but something else, I think of Tamika, a young high-school student in Southern California whom we honored when I was with the Children's Defense Fund. Tamika had some of the most difficult early years that you could possibly imagine. She lived with a substance-abusing mother who sold her body for cocaine. Before the age of eight, she was sexually abused by a series of men in her mother's life. She moved from foster home to foster home, to relative to foster home, first in Florida and then later in California. Now, if you ask most educators what Tamika needed, they would make a very long list: counselor, social worker, psychologist, mentor, nurturing of all kinds. But if you asked Tamika, which is what we did, she had a very, very different answer. What she said was this, "Teach me. Give me the best possible education you can. Make sure that I know everything that the rich suburban kids know and more because I want to be somebody."

In the end, the truth is that we educators — and the schools and colleges that we create — are the only real chance that the Tamikas of this world have, the only real chance that they will live their lives anywhere other than on the margins of our society. That, of course, is a very heavy burden for one system and one group of professionals to bear, and it may not be particularly fair. In fact, I think that we can all agree that it's not particularly fair.

But who is better suited to take up that challenge? Over the past two decades, virtually everything else in the lives of children has gotten worse. Child poverty has gotten worse, violence is up, teen pregnancy is worse, housing is worse, social services are worse, and child abuse, of course, is much worse. Among all the human service professionals, only educators have either held or improved their ground despite the deteriorating conditions of children. For example, today's children actually perform at about the same levels as did their peers twenty years ago. That's not good enough, admittedly, but it is no mean accomplishment.

And results for poor and minority students are up considerably: In the last fifteen years, the gap between white and black students nationwide has declined by about one half. The gap between white and Latino students has declined by about one third. Is that enough? Absolutely not. But it is clear evidence that we educators, perhaps more than anybody else, can indeed make a difference.

Now, going the next distance, actually closing the gap instead of narrowing it, won't be easy, and it's important to be honest about that. It requires all of us to let go of old ideas, to let go of modest expectations and leap not just a little way but a long way ahead in our thinking and in our actions. For those of us who run special programs, small programs, it really means

pushing to extend, to expand, to serve all instead of a handful of teachers. For those of us in a position to influence something larger — systems — and in particular for those of you who have come together here in teams representing one or more systems, this means really pushing into something that for some of you is even scarier — to a bold, system-wide improvement effort. These can be frightening steps, and they do involve risks, both personal and professional.

As I close, what I want to do is leave you with a few words about risk that were shared with me recently by a friend:

> To laugh is to risk appearing a fool
> To weep is to risk appearing sentimental
> To reach out to another is to risk involvement
> To place ideas and dreams before a crowd is to risk their loss
> To love is to risk being loved in return

But risks must be taken, because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing. The person who asks nothing, does nothing, has nothing and is nothing. Only a person who risks is free. There are millions of children and young people in this country who are not even close to free. What you do, what we do, the choices we make and the risks that we take, are absolutely critical to them. For in the end, nobody is more important to those children or to the future of this country than you are. Thank you.

About the American Association for Higher Education

The American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) is a national organization of more than 8,500 individuals dedicated to improving the quality of higher education. AAHE members share two convictions: that higher education should play a more central role in national life, and that each of our institutions can be more effective. AAHE helps to translate those convictions into action, through its programmatic activities, publications, and conferences. Member support enables AAHE to initiate special projects on a range of issues to create effective change at the campus, state, and national levels.

Benefits of AAHE membership include subscriptions to *Change* magazine and the *AAHE Bulletin*; discounts on registration at AAHE's conferences; discounts on AAHE's publications; and more.

AAHE's Special Projects

AAHE Assessment Forum advances the thoughtful practice of assessment aimed at improving the quality of undergraduate education. The Forum sponsors an annual conference and provides publications, consulting, and referral services. Its latest activity explores the connections between assessment, academic good practice, and continuous quality improvement (CQI) ideas to higher education.

AAHE Forum on Faculty Roles and Rewards is a three-year, FIPSE-supported project intended to integrate and disseminate current research on faculty roles and priorities and the faculty reward system. The Forum also reports on how campus practice is adapting to encompass these issues in a rapidly changing academic workplace. The Forum sponsors an annual national conference on faculty roles and rewards, regional meetings, workshops, and occasional publications. It works with faculty leaders, provosts, deans, and department chairs who are leading the reexamination of faculty priorities and the reward system on their campuses. Trustees of universities and colleges and legislators who work on issues of higher education policy also are involved.

AAHE Teaching Initiative works to bring new emphasis to the importance of undergraduate teaching and learning. The Teaching Initiative coordinates a project to develop cases about college teaching, promotes campus use of the teaching portfolio in faculty evaluation and teaching improvement, and cosponsors a conference on TA training. Its most recent effort is a project on the peer review of teaching.

AAHE Technology Projects aims to improve and extend academic programs by building better bridges between academic leaders and campus professionals and vendors with expertise in technology and information resources. Its projects include building a Teaching, Learning & Technology Roundtable, launching new projects that focus on the use of information resources and technologies to advance instruction and scholarship, and increasing awareness of how technology can improve the educational experience for people with disabilities.

Academic Quality Consortium is a joint project of AAHE and the William C. Norris Institute and has as its aim the intelligent adaption of continuous quality improvement (CQI) ideas to higher education. The Consortium supports those institutions active in CQI implementation and shares best practices with the higher education community through the **AAHE CQI Project.**

About the Education Trust

The Education Trust was created to work toward simultaneous reform of the educational system on all levels, from kindergarten through postsecondary. Through its various initiatives, it works to provide strong leadership in the effort to strengthen the connections between K-12 and higher education at the local, state, and national levels. The Trust aims particularly to increase significantly the number of poor and minority students in the nation's urban communities who enter and successfully complete four years of higher education.

The Trust's current goals are:

- to increase the number of postsecondary institutions and school districts working together with the broader community to improve the achievement of urban youth -- especially minority and poor children -- through systemic reform strategies;

- to connect reform-minded educators with one another and with education activists from business and community groups;

- to focus higher education institutions on needed changes in the way they do business in order to support K-12 reform and improve student outcomes at the postsecondary level;

- to improve government policy to provide support for collaborative systems reform.

Staff:
Kati Haycock, *director*;
Nevin Brown, Sarita Brown, Paul Ruiz, Stephanie Robinson, and
Carol Stoel, *principal partners*;
Ruth Mitchell, *project manager,* Standards-Based Professional Development;
Grace Moy, *project assistant*; Sonya Palmore-Wilson, *administrative coordinator*;
Toni Elam, *administrative secretary*

Current Initiatives of the Education Trust

Community Compacts for Student Success (CCSS). Administered by the Education Trust for The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Community Compacts for Student Success program engages participating urban communities in developing and implementing collaborative, standards-based, systemic strategies to increase student success.

The Compact is an agreement among an area's educational (K-12 and postsecondary), business, and community leaders to commit themselves to working together for six to eight years to put in place a set of systemic reforms to increase dramatically the number of poor and minority students who complete high schools, enroll in postsecondary education, and persist to completion. The Compact network comprises the following communities: Birmingham, AL; El Paso, TX; Hartford, CT; Philadelphia, PA; Providence, RI; and Pueblo, CO.

The Network currently is not accepting new members, but information about the Compacts and their strategies is available.

K-16 Initiative. The K-16 Initiative builds on lessons learned from the Community Compacts for Student Success. It aims at increasing higher education's involvement at the national, state, and local levels in developing and carrying out systemic strategies to improve education at all levels, kindergarten through college graduation. K-16 participants work together nationally, as well as in their own communities, to define common educational principles, shape education policy, and plan and implement action agendas.

Participation in the K-16 Initiative is open to all communities willing to collaborate and able to bring together leaders from K-12, higher education, and the broader community in a mutually designed effort to improve student achievement, with special focus on minorities and the poor.

Title 1. Title 1 (formerly Chapter 1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is the federal government's largest contribution to public education, affecting more than 5.5 million students in more than two-thirds of the nation's schools--including all of those attended by high concentrations of poor students. The Education Trust served as the home for the work of an independent Commission on Chapter 1, which issued a 1992 report, "Making Schools Work for Children in Poverty," that significantly influenced the reauthorization of the ESEA during the 103rd Congress.

As a result of the Commission's work, the new Title 1 has shifted from a remedial, add-on program to an engine for improving whole schools serving poor children. The Education Trust will continue its Title 1 work through monitoring the Federal government's implementation of the act and by assisting local communities in understanding and using the new opportunities available in the Title 1 program.

National Conference on School/College Collaboration. Since 1990, AAHE has sponsored an annual conference that attracts some 500+ participants to discuss ways of increasing student achievement through partnership activities. The Sixth National Conference on School/College Collaboration to be held in 1995 will continue to emphasize national standards issues and professional development of teachers with a focus on foreign languages and fine arts.

Partnerships for Standards-Based Professional Development of K-12 Educators. This new effort supported by a grant from the Department of Education is centered on the Community Compacts of Philadelphia, Pueblo, and El Paso. The three Compacts will develop a model of standards-based professional development beginning with community-wide discussions of standards, aimed at producing content standards. Teachers in each city will then examine student work to establish performance standards, and finally design appropriate curriculum and assessments to achieve the standards. As work proceeds, information about progress will be available in the K-16 newsletter and a major dissemination roll-out of the model is planned for other cities.

Resources Available from the Education Trust

Publications. AAHE's Publications Department offers an inventory of books on issues of school/college collaboration. The Education Trust also publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Thinking K-16,* and a variety of manuals and materials.

Information exchange. The Education Trust staff offers its experience and knowledge in school/college collaboration through technical assistance to individuals, schools, postsecondary institutions, and organizations.

Audiotapes. Most annual conference sessions are audiotaped and available for purchase.

Academic Alliances. During 1987-1991, AAHE was home to the National Project in Support of Academic Alliances, funded by the MacArthur Foundation. Academic alliances are local collaboratives between school and college faculty who teach in the same discipline or interdisciplinary area of study. The Project has ended, but the Education Trust continues to work as an information center to broaden the advocacy base for academic alliances.

The Education Trust
American Association for Higher Education
One Dupont Circle, Suite 360
Washington, DC 20036-1110
Ph. 202/293-6440, Fax 202/293-0073

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